

# St. Francis Climate Survey Results

The St. Francis Board of Education appreciates the feedback provided by parents in the recent Climate Survey. The St. Francis Strategic Vision states:

*We will engage in a program of continuous improvement and solicit feedback from our parents in an effort to increase the level of satisfaction with St. Francis.”*

With your help, we have now taken that important first step. We received feedback from 41 individuals. While we would have loved to have 100% participation, we are very happy with the response we received.

The purpose of this document is to communicate the results of the survey. The survey was presented in the following sections:

- Overall Impression
- Faith Development
- Academics
- Bullying/Behavior Management
- Cost
- Communication/Technology

Results from each of these sections will be summarized in this document.

## Overall Impression

We are happy to report that the results of the important question “...do you feel St. Francis met your expectations?” were a unanimous “Yes”. The component most mentioned as being the reason you send your child/children to St. Francis was “Christian Values”. A close 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> were “Small class/overall enrollment size” and “Quality of education better than public schools in town”. This guides us in identifying our strengths that we can build on and what areas need to be protected as we allocate resources to meet future goals.

## Faith Development

The main question in this section was “Do you feel the curriculum is infused with faith development at an appropriate level?” The results were well centered down the middle with the large majority of respondents answering a 3 out of 5 (1 = need more, 5 = need less). Therefore, we can conclude that parents are very satisfied with our current level of religious instruction and faith integration.

## Academics

The main question in this section was “Overall, how would you rate your child’s educational experience this year?” Using a 1-5 scale with 1 being unacceptable and 5 being exceptional, the average response was 4.25. There were no 1’s or 2’s and the majority of the responses were 4’s and 5’s.

The general theme in the verbatim comments seemed to be that the parents appreciated their children being challenged at St. Francis. One thing we may be able to improve upon is more consistent communication from teachers on what their children are studying. Overall, the parents of St. Francis want to be highly involved in their children’s education and need information in order to help their children at home. However, the question was apparently too broad. Consequently, there needs to be further investigation as to whether parents are referring to general understanding of the curriculum, daily academic performance, daily academic expectations, or something else entirely.

In order to maintain our academic competitiveness, the consensus is for a re-emphasis on problem solving skills. Students need more opportunities to “figure stuff out on their own” to promote problem solving. This could be accomplished through “flipped classroom” opportunities that put the onus on students to introduce themselves to concepts at home on their own time. Students then spend class time practicing application of the material while teachers provide correction and refinement of understanding.

### **Bullying/Behavior Management**

To the questions “Do you feel your child is safe at school”, the average answer was 4.5 on a scale of 1 being “dangerous” and 5 being “safe”. To the question as to how St. Francis staff and administration handled behavior challenges, the average was 4.2 on a 1 – 5 scale with 1 being “very dissatisfied” and 5 being “very satisfied”.

Regarding security, there was some feedback about having a more structured front door security system. This is being addressed with the building project and we believe the plans in place for a new front entrance will make it easier to monitor people entering and leaving the building. The building committee is also adding other security features in the new building that are intentionally not advertised.

### **Cost**

The intent of this question was to understand how people feel about the cost at St. Francis. There were many great ideas and suggestions on what additional programs could be added. School improvements cost money whether it be for new programs, new computers or more teachers. We wanted to understand how parents felt about raising tuition in order to provide these requested services. What we found was that the scale was tipped towards parents feeling that St. Francis was economical. On a scale of 1 being “very economical” to 5 being “too expensive”, the average response was 2.7. That is, the majority of parents would support higher tuition if the school can show a direct increase in value for the money.

There were several verbatim comments concerning the miscellaneous fees being collected for projects and parties. Because of this, we are evaluating rolling these fees into tuition in order to reduce the need to collect these fees throughout the school year. Including these fees into tuition will also allow those receiving financial aid to apply that aid to the fees. They are a cost of education, and including them in tuition is appropriate.

The most common theme for added programs and initiatives was to add staffing to provide additional help for students. This builds on the earlier notion that small class sizes and individualized attention was extremely influential in parents choosing St. Francis. There is an apparent need in Grades K-1 to have a full time aide as these students are very needy and impressionable. Secondary is to provide a 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade floater. Ideally, this would be a licensed teacher to serve as another assisted learning teacher dedicated to mainstreaming students who don’t currently qualify for direct services but are slightly below average achievement. Third would be to add an additional extended learning assistant to allow a three tier achievement system for high achieving students as well. This would allow the Extended Learning teacher to narrow the size and dedicate more individual time to a smaller population.

The school board will continue to evaluate costs of these ideas and verify parents see value in the added expense. This value/expense trade-off will be considered as the finance committee and school board develop long term financial plans.

## **Communication/Technology**

The point of this section was to understand where parents thought we should be spending technology dollars. The survey indicated parents were happy with the progress that has been made in the last two years, but want to see that progress accelerated. There was also a feeling, that integration in the classroom isn't keeping pace with infrastructure improvements.

Technology was a priority when the school board hired Dr. Herrick. We supported his idea of not chasing other schools, but chasing what technology companies like Google, Oracle, and Microsoft were implementing. That is, availability of cloud-based services instead of physical devices. Dr. Herrick has been directed to provide an explanation in better laymen's terms of his vision to the community and to push development as fast as resources will allow.

Meanwhile, we recognize a need for more professional development in the area of technology and more motivation and incentives for classroom integration. We also recognize Dr. Herrick doesn't have enough hours in the day to accelerate the progress. The school board is therefore investigating cost effective ways to supplement his work with various contracted services.

### **Summary**

We appreciate the feedback provided by all those who participated in this survey. While we plan on continuing this effort in the future, we would also like to remind everyone that feedback is an on-going process and we welcome any parent feedback or questions at any time.

Sincerely,

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